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NOTE TO A SCIENTIST

SIR : So in a few years' time we shall know whether the universe had a beginning or existed from infinity. I anticipate that in a few years' time some theological ideas are going to receive a hard knock, and from science. I am not troubled about certain theological ideas; they ought to be knocked, and knocked hard; on the whole I think they cover up more self-deception, and represent more cowardice in face of truth, than many other ideas by which men live. Nevertheless, permit me to address myself to you, to you as a scientist, and myself as one who lives on the fringe of such matters.

I lay all my cards on the table. At the heart of any religious attitude to the universe I place wonder and awe, and I will throw in amazement as well. And without these emotions I doubt if anyone is at home in the universe or really able to participate in it. There are many men who cannot participate. I respect them, and I doubt whether their experience is merely a modern one. The opposite of wonder, awe and amazement is nothingness, and there have been many men of sensibility who have been able to discover nothing but nothingness, temporarily, and some for over a long period of time. I hold in deepest respect, for instance, the atheist existentialist. He is the representative of some who are willing to follow their thinking to where, I presume, it hurts, and hurts terribly. And it would be a poor estimation of thinking and the integrity that can go with it if the possibility of nothingness as opposed to wonder, were not a real alternative.

There are no closed gates if the religious attitude is to be able to express itself. I understand, I think, the condition of the man who says there is nothing, that the only fact is death, and that the beginning and end and sublimation of all things is in death. I wonder at his noble courage in living at all. But the opposite of nothingness, and its general consequences, is wonder, awe and amazement. I have found myself using the word wonder of the man who really believes in nothing. I find some deep brotherhood with him. He is in this sheathe of a universe with me and—I cannot help it—he makes the universe more wonderful to me. He with his integrity helps me to find myself in the position in which the universe is my home.

My cards then are, that the only response I can make to a participating universe, and in which I participate, are wonder and awe. And I trust you will allow me to show you that, by granting to me that I have some knowledge of the opposite. Let me then try to explain this emotion, if emotion it is.

A Mystery

When I was a boy the Vicar who tried to teach me theology (and believe me I listened, I still remember it), tried once to explain the doctrine of the Trinity, or rather what he called the mystery of the Trinity. He told the story of the Augustine who came to England. The great man was walking on the sea-shore. He saw no way whatever through the strange metaphysical mystery. He came upon a couple of children playing in the sand. They had dug a hole and were running down to the sea with their buckets and bringing back the water and trying to fill up the hole. They told him they were trying to empty all the ocean into the hole. The harassed thinker saw the light. He had been trying to empty the infinite ocean of the mystery of the Trinity into the hole of his reason.

Now, I am not putting up a case for Augustine, but that story provides me with a certain analogy.

I understand that one of the first implicit assumptions of science is that there is no end to discovery. The whole of its experience leads to the belief that the range in which it works is endless and always will be so. One discovery leads to another. The scientist will always be going to the ocean, as it were, with his bucket, and pouring into the hole he has dug with his discoveries the water that he finds in the ocean; although unlike the children he does not believe that he can empty the ocean. And, it must be supposed, that in a billion years' time, if this planet is still a planet, and if there is still such an activity as science, the scientist of the future will still be going down to the ocean to fill his bucket, and the ocean will still be there. And the relative size of the hole and the ocean will be just as it is now.

Einstein and Religion

Now, the ocean to which the scientist goes is just as real as the hole which he has dug, and just as real as himself. Indeed, it is not pushing comparison too far to suggest that the ocean is more real than the scientist. For whenever he has faded away into whatever scientists fade into, the ocean will still be there waiting for the buckets of his future colleagues. There is no end to the ocean, no depth or height, each secret leads on to an infinity of secrets, and not merely the infinity of numbers but the infinity of fathomless experience. To the scientist the ocean of the universe is but an impenetrable veil of mystery which he has to explore. Always the impenetrable, no matter how much water he may have taken up.

I, therefore, quote Einstein. "To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself to us as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty, which our full faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive form, this knowledge, this feeling, is at the centre of true religiousness".

I am not concerned in this note with highest wisdom or radiant beauty. My concern is with the fact that what is impenetrable by science really exists. There is as it were a beyond which can never be penetrated by the scientific method, yet which is as relevant to the method as the ocean is to the hole in the sand in the analogy I have used. No matter how far, wide or deep the scientist may range in discovery; no matter what startling alternatives he offers to the human condition, the ocean will still be there. And to Einstein at least it was of such a reality that it could manifest itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty. Thank you.

IN THE KHASI VILLAGES

By Dran and Maida Wallang

(The writers are brother and sister helpers of Margaret Barr in the Khasi Hills. The Editor asked Margaret to write a Christmas article. She has responded through her helpers. First, an extract from an accompanying letter.)

"THE school-children will all be going home at Christmas, and though we expect Maida's two small sons for the holidays, and there may also be a party of young Units from Shillong and Jowai coming for a short youth-leadership course, I cannot tell you anything about these in advance, it's all much too hypothetical. I hoped for such a party in October, but no one turned up. Dran and Maida will both be here; they have no desire for a holiday at that time, and patients are as likely to abound on Christmas Day as on any other day in the year. I shall also be here, either taking the above-mentioned youth conference or alternatively enjoying a well-earned rest after a really hectic year's teaching. And on Christmas Day I intend to do as we have done for several years now, invite all the children of the Kharang church for a bit of a tea-party. That will mean making cakes and sweets and biscuits and what not.

"It was indeed a blessed day for the K.R.C. when Dran and Maida Wallang came along. They continue to delight me more and more by their unselfishness, their endless capacity for hard work, their reliability, and their unfailing good humour and sense of fun. They are grand companions, and no day passes without us all having a good laugh about something or other. The younger girls are now helping Maida with the midwifery and Dran with the dispensary, and the school-children could not possibly have a better example of what an ideal rural worker should be. Our progress during the last two years owes more to these two than to any other one cause, or, I should say, to all other causes put together."

Kong Barr has asked us to write an article on the difficulties that confront anyone trying to do health and maternity welfare work amongst Khasi villagers. So we are giving her our ideas in Khasi, and she is writing them in English.

The first and major difficulty that confronts the midwife is to persuade the village women of the importance of ante-natal care. They do not take the trouble to come to the clinic during pregnancy, and then send for us in a panic at the eleventh hour if anything goes wrong. This is constantly happening, and every time it confronts us with the midwife's most difficult decision: to respond to the call, or to refuse. If we respond in the hope that there may be something we can do and find that it is too late, as it almost always is, the word rapidly spreads around that those nurses at Kharang are no good; they went to so-and-so, but she died just the same. Or if, by some miracle, we succeed, then the word goes around that there is no need to be bothered going to the ante-natal clinic, as the nurses will go wherever they are called whether the woman has or has not been attending the clinic. But if we refuse, how can we avoid being haunted by the thought that we might have saved the woman.

Our instructions from the Red Cross centre where we were trained are that we must not take cases who have not been attending the clinic. But where the need and the distances are so great and the ignorance so appalling, it is not always easy to obey these instructions. Reason and training say: "You spoil your own and the centre's reputation, and undermine your influence by taking cases you cannot handle." But pity says: "You cannot refuse to try and help a fellow human being in need." And when reason and pity conflict, it is not always reason that wins. And the tragedy of the whole situation is that, if only the woman had come to us in time, we could in almost every case have either made the necessary corrections ourselves or, if it was clearly going to be a case of abnormal labour, sent the patient to hospital. Indeed, during the three years that I have worked here, I have not had one failure amongst the cases who have come for ante-natal care, as the few that I knew would be beyond my powers to deal with have accepted my advice, and arranged to go to hospital while there was still time. This major difficulty is one that will diminish with the spread of education and enlightenment, and already there are far more women attending the ante-natal clinic than when I started, and sporadic visits to the more distant villages are slowly but surely bringing more and more into attendance.

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Another difficulty of a different nature, and due more to narrow-mindedness than ignorance or laziness, arises from the variety of religious affiliations in these villages and the rivalries that exist between them. Many of the leading Presbyterians of Kharang, for instance, are bitterly opposed to the Centre and all its works. They come to us for help only when driven by desperate need, and generally when everything else has been tried and the patient is at death's door. Whether this opposition is to Kong Barr as a Unitarian, to me as a Catholic, or to Dran as a non-Christian, is not clear. And perhaps the problem will be solved in the near future by the addition of a member of that church to our staff. However that may be, it is one of the things we have to contend with at present, which we do cheerfully and with malice toward none.

Then, too, there is the difficulty of the non-Christian Khasi, who in all of life's crises, birth, sickness, and death, tends to fly to divination and the ministrations of the "medicine-man" and his egg-breaking ceremonies. Almost as often as not, when called to a confinement, I have to start by clearing the house of all this paraphernalia and the attendant crowd of interested spectators of all ages and both sexes before I can begin work. And Dran, too, constantly finds his efforts made abortive by the patient, finding that a day or two of his medicine does not produce an immediate and complete cure, turning to the same magical expedients instead of patiently persevering with Dran's treatment.

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Still another difficulty that we both find is the long distances to travel on foot to visit patients, sometimes to villages so far off the beaten track that the children still run away in terror at sight of a stranger, even a Khasi, and the fact that in a small rural centre like this there can be no regular duty hours and times off. We all have to be on duty (or at least on call) for every one of the twenty-four hours, seven days a week.

And now Dran takes up the tale. Ignorance, narrow-mindedness, and superstition are his great enemies. He gives a patient medicine for three days with careful instructions as to how and when to take it (written instructions are, of course, of no use where everybody is illiterate). He returns the next day for more, saying he took it all in one dose with a pint of toddy the night before. Alternatively, he does not take it at all till he has consulted his "medicine-man", and the egg-breaking formalities have proved favourable. If unfavourable, he will probably throw the medicine away, and be back at the dispensary a few days later complaining that he is still as bad as ever or worse.

A further difficulty for Dran is that, in the complete absence of anyone with veterinary knowledge, he is often called upon to prescribe for sick animals, of which he has no experience. And other crises arise which are quite outside the range of his experience, such as the stopping of the circulation by overtight rings or bangles put on to small hands or feet that do not stay small, a coin swallowed and stuck in a child's throat, filthy stuff supposed to heal or guard applied to children's eyes and then taken out again with a pin and the child's sight ruined. Terrible things indeed, which keep happening through ignorance and superstition. And our amateur doctor has to trust to his initiative and intelligence to do the best he can for the sufferers.

But in spite of all this, we both love our work and feel that never before have we had such a thoroughly worth-while job. Though both town-bred, we have taken to rural life like ducks to water, and have no desire to be anywhere other than where we are or to do any work other than that which comes to our hands every day.

WHAT ABOUT 1962?

By John Hinkins

(Arrangements are being made by the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches to mark in a suitable way, in the year 1962, the three hundredth anniversary of the Ejection of Ministers in 1662. Other arrangements are being made in other quarters. Mr. John Hinkins writes about the event intended to be celebrated.)

SOME Unitarians are concerned with the question of commemorating the Great Ejectment of 1662. Of these, again some would concentrate upon the debt we owe to the Ejected, as a result of whose sacrifice many of the churches we now hold came into being. Yet others would seek to collaborate with other non-conformist denominations in whatever steps they are taking to commemorate.

My view is that we should take unilateral action, and take it with a purpose.

While acknowledging the heroism of those who left home and church rather than give their "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained in and by the book entitled the Book of Common Prayer", we should remember that their sacrifice was not really for freedom of conscience. These men were of the school of thought of those who supported, in 1646, a Bill punishing with death "those who denied doctrines relating to the Trinity and Incarnation" (Firth's *Oliver Cromwell*). It was not from the Episcopalians that Cromwell protected Biddle, but from those who afterwards became Non-conformists. It is true that Richard Baxter, one of the ejected, can be cited as a man of wide tolerance, but he must have been an exception. To quote Firth again: "To let men serve God according to the persuasion of their own consciences", wrote one Presbyterian divine, "was to cast out one devil that seven worse might enter". Even in 1689, under the influence of William the Third, the "bulk of English Nonconformists" was content that Unitarians should be refused the limited freedoms granted to the rest by the Toleration Act.

The year 1662 can be regarded as the year of drama, of concentrated tragedy, when intolerance displayed in lurid form its evil destructiveness. From that date we may display as graphically as possible the nation's movement towards grace and freedom, the escape of some congregations from the darkness, the birth of others in comparative light. But the light is still comparative and freedom is not complete.

In and about 1912, some Congregationalists at least fervently proclaimed the need of extending the realm of freedom. Dr. Selbie regarded himself as speaking for all free churches in these words: "They are against the principle of State Establishment because it means secular control in spiritual things".

Some Congregationalists and others may today be so concerned with the question of unity of the churches that their fervour for disestablishment has become clouded. Yet what was true in 1912 is still true. Religion is not free so long as the State favours, and to a large extent controls, one form more than the rest.

There are two ways in which the memory of "our martyrs" may be used. One is as a reminder that loyalty to the best we know entails discomforts in varying measure. The other is as fuel for the flames of hatred. This second cannot be our way. Open to us are the ways of persuasion, the argument that it is actually better to yield rights to others than to fight to the last ditch in the maintenance of privilege. Can the defenders of establishment be brought to realize that by 1962, and cleanse their church by repentance and widen the bounds of freedom by, among other things, setting the monarch of this kingdom free?

OVERSEAS

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ADVANCE

AMERICAN Unitarians have taken another step in the planning of their Forward Drive. Over the past ten years there has been a rise of 56 per cent in their membership and this is taken as demonstrating the need to strengthen their facilities for coping with "one of the fastest rates of increase of any denomination in America".

On December 11 they announced that Percival F. Brundage had been appointed general chairman of the nation-wide Unitarian Development Fund campaign to raise from 3,000,000 to 5,000,000 dollars. This fund is intended to meet the five major needs of the rapidly-growing movement: the ministry, fellowships, a building loan fund, campus programmes for college students, and information and education services.

The fund will be used to help train and recruit ministers, for even there they have a shortage especially when fellowships are becoming churches so quickly; to organize and support fellowship groups which are springing up all over the States, and more of which could be formed if facilities for assistance were available; to augment the building loan fund so that larger loans may be made to churches which are building for the first time or extending their premises; to provide special programmes for university students at their individual colleges; and to expand the information and education services for the general public and for Unitarians.

Mr. Brundage retired a year ago from the directorship of the United States Bureau of the Budget, having served two years as deputy-director and two years as director. Previously, he was the senior partner in the world-wide accounting firm of Price, Waterhouse and Co. He was also national chairman of the fund-raising campaign of the Unitarian Service Committee for several years and a member of the Board of Directors of the American Unitarian Association for many years. Unitarians outside the States will best know him as for three years the President of the I.A.R.F. and for nine years in all a member of its Executive Committee. No better chairman could have been found for this stupendous task, and even by American standards it is in truth a stupendous task.

Unitarians in this country will wish this campaign every success. Its progress will be watched, maybe a little enviously no doubt, but more so with a quiet confidence that success will bless the efforts, for when British visitors were in the U.S.A. this summer they were conscious of a determination to seize every opportunity to advance and a readiness to make the sacrifices which clearly would be required. Dr. Frederick May Eliot meant this to be his final contribution towards Unitarian progress, and his successor, Dr. Greeley, will find many to help him realize Dr. Eliot's dream.

John Kielty.

THE BRAHMO SAMAJ—INDIA

THE sixty-eighth conference of the Brahmo Samaj (the Unitarians of All-India) was held at Patna from October 24 to October 27. It was presided over by Sri Sadri Ranjan Das, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of India.

The following resolutions were passed on behalf of the Conference Committee, and readers will be interested in them.

(a) Whereas unity of India has been challenged again and again through ages and whereas great men have appeared in different ages to underline the essential unity of Indian culture based on spiritual realization, culminating in the birth of the colossus of the new age, Raja Rammohun Roy, and whereas it seems that in the present day the unity of India is still threatened with various disintegrating evil forces such as caste system, communalism and provincialism and linguism, this All-India session of the Brahmo Conference resolves that universalism in the spirit of toleration should be preached through educational and other organizations throughout India in order to make Indian unity a reality.

(b) Whereas world peace has again and again been threatened by powers having rival secular interests, whereas the spread of the ideal of humanism is the only defence against the clash of secular interest, and whereas the ideal of humanism can be realized by practising international goodwill through literature, holding of inter-nation conferences, exchange of ideas and individual spiritual development, this All-India session of the Brahmo Conference resolves that the universal religion, which emphasizes the unity in diversity, should be given wide publicity through international bodies and by encouraging the study of comparative religion in the important universities of the world.

(c) Whereas over-emphasis on the value of money in one's life, resulting in thoughtless scrambling for accumulation of money, is creating class hatred, whereas the colour hatred is based on the false conviction of superiority of white men over the coloured brethren and whereas both class and colour hatred are due to disregarding of the law of love enforced by the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, this All-India session of the Brahmo Conference resolves that in everyday life and in all social intercourses this ideal of equality of man in the eye of God should always be upheld and all ideas and activities which encourage class and colour hatred should be gradually removed and endeavour should be made to transform social and economic structure in conformity with the ideal of establishing equal rights and responsibilities.

From My Journal

By "Simplicitas"

AS the annual Sale of Work draws near, my wife is to be seen holding forth in various huddles of women. I happened to be passing the small classroom this afternoon, and heard her saying, somewhat loudly: "Why shouldn't you do the sweets this year, for a change? We are a religious body here and no one has any corns to be trodden on." When we got home, I remarked on what I had overheard. "It was meant to be heard, and all over the Chapel", she said somewhat tartly for her. "I say it loudly every year, and it has always worked".

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I groaned somewhat in spirit yesterday morning as Ruth gave me my early breakfast so that I could catch the express and be at L. for morning service. I told her I was getting too old to go off on these distant preaching engagements, with their hearty hospitality. She hoped it wouldn't be as tiring as I anticipated, and it wasn't! The secretary left the vestry at 10.45 a.m. and said no one would disturb me until service-time. My hostess gave me small portions of a meal much less rich than the customary Sunday dinner. She then told me I was free of her drawing room until teatime. She patted a rug on the couch, and said if I wanted a walk here was a map and the front-door key. I asked who had taught her how to treat a visiting parson, and she said she was a daughter of a manse. After a gay supper and a little music, the family dispersed at ten, saying I was free to sit up by the fire as long as I wished. I think secretaries would find hospitality easier to obtain if people realized how much a visiting parson needs privacy, and how little talking they need to offer their strange guest.

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One of the embarrassing aspects of preaching away is meeting people who expect to be recognized by name. "Of course you remember me, Mr. S——!" How their ego visibly deflates when all feelers draw a blank and I confess myself at a loss. I therefore had the warmest greeting for the woman who shook my hand this morning at L—— and said, "I'm Mrs. E——. You once stayed with my mother, Mrs. W——, at B——". It was easy then to remember that happy week-end with this woman in her radiant twenties. I asked after the Great Dane who had accompanied our evening walk, and we plunged right away into recollection. It was a happy meeting.

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The Smallwoods, who moved down south upon their marriage, were back this week seeing their parents, and this morning they brought their new baby to service. The baby didn't like it, the parents couldn't attend, the congregation couldn't hear, and I couldn't think. They doubtless wanted their friends to see the baby. I was there to lead those present in the worship of God.

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We Unitarians generally imagine that it is matters of belief that makes the difference between Catholic and Nonconformist. The differences exist, but tonight I wondered whether a more significant difference is perhaps a difference of emphasis. "Gloria tibi Domine" rang out as I passed in the dark by the Roman Catholic Church. "Glory be to Thee, O God," I echoed as I made my way to the Square, where the Gospel Hall folk were holding an open-air meeting, and singing "This will be glory for me, glory for me". There is a great deal of "me" when you look at nonconformist worship in general. It would be a good thing if we could think less of ourselves and more of God.

UNITARIAN ANCESTORS

By John Rowland

THE recent 250th anniversary celebrations of the Unitarian Church at Newington Green has brought into the mind of many London Unitarians the once famous and now almost forgotten name of Mrs. Barbauld, whose books were widely read in Georgian days.

It is, therefore, perhaps appropriate that a new book on Mrs. Barbauld and her family circle should now appear. *Georgian Chronicle*, by Betsy Rodgers (Methuen: 21s.), is an interesting footnote to the early history of nonconformity, which owes much to Unitarian sources—indeed, among those to whom Mrs. Rodgers acknowledges her debt is the Rev. H. L. Short, and some of the hitherto unpublished letters with which the book concludes come from the library of Manchester College, Oxford.

The book gives an extremely readable version of the life of Mrs. Barbauld, and of the debt which she owed to the Warrington Academy. It also portrays a family group, starting with her great-grandfather, John Jennings, who was ejected from his living by Charles II, and dealing with the Aikins (her immediate ancestors), who were close friends of Priestley and of other leading dissenters of their day.

Noteworthy is the influence which these men, and their descendants, exercised, well outside the nonconformist circles where they might have been expected to be regarded as important. Mrs. Barbauld's nephew, Arthur Aikin, for instance, was for many years secretary of the Society of Arts (now the Royal Society of Arts), living in a house next to the Society's building in the Adelphi, London, and having much to do with the wide influence which it has ever since exercised in the border territory between science, commerce, and the arts.

Many of the great families of Georgian days—the Wedgwoods, for example—come into the picture, too; and the book provides abundant evidence of the way in which early Unitarianism (often not called by that name in those early days) played a part in the progress of science and political reform, as well as in the directly religious field.

Mrs. Rodgers has a great gift for making these almost forgotten people come to life. There is a great barrier, generally speaking, which divides modern men from the men of the eighteenth century. All the many changes in external affairs which stem, largely, from the Industrial Revolution make it very difficult for us to understand or appreciate what our ancestors of two centuries ago were thinking, or to grasp their attitude to life. Yet books of this type can do much to make them understandable to us today.

A journey across England (such as that from Warrington to Shrewsbury), which would now take, perhaps, eight or ten hours, then took almost as many days. The world of the North of England was far from the world of London. Yet this division was probably less important than the division between Anglicanism and Dissent. Forbidden to study at Oxford or Cambridge, forbidden (almost) to preach Unitarian views, the dissenters were a society of their own. Yet they contrived, by such teaching organizations as the Warrington Academy, to make themselves an influential and important group. Mrs. Rodgers points out, for instance, that the brilliance of the tutors at Warrington made a small Lancashire printer, to whom they entrusted their works, into one of the most important publishers in the country.

This book is, in a sense, a footnote to history. As such, it will probably not create any great sensation in the literary world. But it deserves to be widely read, for it makes quite clear various tendencies in the past of liberal thought which we, so many years later, will neglect at our peril.

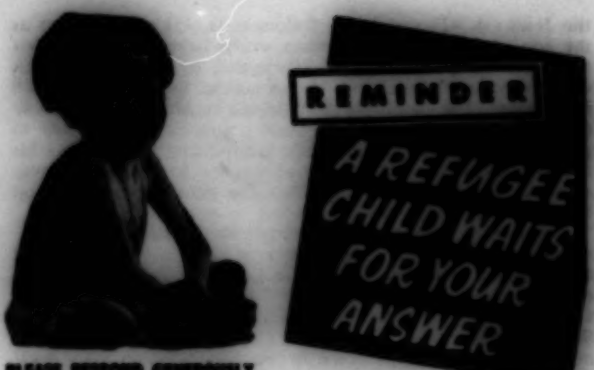
FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

By Arthur J. Long

AT Christmas time, it is impossible to evade the challenge of one of the basic tenets of traditional Christianity: the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. Christmas, after all, is the festival of the Nativity, and from the earliest times Christians have always claimed that Jesus had no human father, and that he was born, not as the consequence of normal sexual intercourse, but through the direct action of the Holy Ghost upon his mother. The doctrine was explicitly taught by Ignatius (115 A.D.), and it formed a part of the earliest creeds in both East and West.

An extension of the dogma, dating from the fourth century, is the idea of the Perpetual Virginity of Mary. This affirms that Mary was entirely innocent of any sort of sex experience; that she remained a virgin in the technical, medical sense, even after the birth of Jesus, and that the brethren of Jesus referred to in the New Testament were, in fact, step-brethren—the children of Joseph by a previous marriage. This notion of perpetual virginity still forms an essential part of Catholic doctrine, but it is not pressed by other Christians.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It is worth noting that it makes the actual birth of Jesus—the physical process by which he came into the world—a miracle of the first order, quite apart from the question of his conception. One would have thought that this might have commended it to *all* traditional Christians, but apparently, where miracles are concerned, no less than in other matters, one can have too much of a good thing.

The dogmatic fitness of the idea of the Virgin Birth—especially in relation to the idea of the Incarnation—has often been stressed. But it is probably true to say that no other single aspect of traditional Christianity has been more challenged in modern times, and it is now generally rejected by all liberals and modernists, as well as by some middle-of-the-road Christians.

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The doctrine can be challenged on two grounds: firstly, as an instance of spurious supernaturalism; and secondly, because of inadequate scriptural evidence. That the Virgin Birth was affirmed from the first as a tremendous miracle is obvious. As such, it has been frequently used to support the claims made by the Church on behalf of Jesus. It was even accepted by some Unitarians in former days, as proving, for example, the Messiahship of Jesus. But most modern liberals repudiate entirely the idea of the miraculous, so the idea of a virgin birth, for Jesus or for anyone, is automatically ruled out.

But quite apart from the general question of miracles, what of the New Testament evidence? It has been generally assumed that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is certainly scriptural. Yet in actual fact, the New Testament as a whole ignores it. There is nothing in *Mark*, nothing in *John* (the first and the last of the Gospels) and nothing in Paul. Two passages in Paul's letters, "born of a woman, born under the law" (Gal. iv. 4) and "born of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. i. 3), would seem to imply belief in the human paternity of Jesus, and the Fourth Gospel makes both the Jews (vi. 42) and Jesus' followers (i. 45) refer to him as the son of Joseph. It is always worth bearing in mind that the New Testament is very concerned to prove that Jesus was descended from David—as, of course, the Messiah should have been. The elaborate genealogies in *Matthew* and *Luke* (each slightly different, incidentally), specifically designed to prove his Davidic descent, both assume that Joseph was his father. To argue, as Catholic apologists do, that Mary was also of Davidic descent, or that the genealogies are valid because Joseph was the legal father, is pure expediency.

The only support for the Virgin Birth in the New Testament is found in the first chapter of *Matthew* and the first two chapters of *Luke*. Yet even in Luke, the only indisputable evidence is in verses 34 and 35: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? etc." But as has often been pointed out, there are many other passages in *Luke* supporting the idea of normal parenthood, and even in the Annunciation story itself there is a reference to "the throne of *his father* David" (i. 32). It may very well be, therefore, that verses 34 and 35 are an interpolation. The Annunciation would then become a simple announcement, according to a frequent Old Testament pattern, of a forthcoming birth of supreme importance. The ambivalence of *Luke*, as it now stands, is clearly illustrated in iii. 23: "being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph". Here again, the words in brackets could very well be a later insertion.

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Matthew, with his slightly unpleasant story of Joseph entertaining grave suspicions when his betrothed is found to be with child (i. 18 ff.), is much more explicit. But the whole of the first two chapters of *Matthew* is of very dubious validity, and in i. 22-23 the real source of the whole doctrine is clearly revealed. It obviously sprang from the famous passage in Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son" (vii. 14). We now know that this particular passage does not imply a virgin birth (the Hebrew means "young woman" and *not* "virgin"), and that it cannot in any case refer to Jesus.

The claim of virgin birth, when all is said and done, has not been made for Jesus alone. It was also claimed for several other of the great teachers of antiquity, notably for Plato and the Buddha. The reason is not far to seek. The facts of birth and sex have been commonly regarded as impure and unclean, something from which a great religious figure should be preserved as far as possible. The notion still survives in many quarters, but to intelligent and informed opinion there is now nothing impure or unholy about sex as such. Any idea of virgin birth, therefore, is now quite unnecessary, and there is nothing derogatory to even the highest and holiest of men in the fact of a normal conception and birth. If, as even Christian orthodoxy affirms, Jesus was "perfect man" (whatever else he may or may not have been), an expression which, in this context, means a perfectly normal human being, whole and complete, are we not bound to assume that his birth and paternity were normal? It is for this very reason that many otherwise orthodox Christians now reject the Virgin Birth. There is, indeed, no necessary connection between the Virgin Birth and the Incarnation, or the idea of Jesus as the Second Person in Trinity. The whole notion of a virgin "with child by the Holy Ghost" is, in fact, akin to pagan mythology, and far more conducive to heresy than to orthodox Christian belief.

The alternative to virgin birth in the case of Jesus is not illegitimacy, despite a malicious early tradition to this effect. There is no reason at all why we should not assume that Jesus was born in wedlock, and that he was, in fact, what the rest of the New Testament implies: the first-born son of a large family. This does not necessarily mean that we must cut out all references to the Virgin Birth from our carols and subject ourselves to a sort of bowdlerized Christmas. We can still continue to sing of the "maiden that is makeless"—the "mother and maiden never none but she"—provided we remember, with the rational half of our minds, that this is merely a quaint myth which became tacked on to Christianity at an early date, a myth which, though hallowed by art and tradition, is now devoid of any real significance.

12

ANGRY—YOUNG AND OLD

By Francis Terry

SHOULD young men be angry? And was Yeats right in praying to remain an angry old one?

No one regards anger as wholly bad. Though we disapprove of the man who loses his temper too easily, we do not respect the one who has none to keep. Perhaps, indeed, there is no element in our nature which does not spring originally from some sound root of good. Men have usually ascribed wrath to their gods; and this has not been so much a deliberate worshipping of evil as a sign that anger seemed to them to be an essential part of goodness, as they saw it in the characters of trusted leaders and felt it in their own hearts. What then is its true place and function?

There is good in the natural outburst of painful feeling, but grave danger when the mind seeks to rid itself of the pain. The man is shaken by emotion, keenly sensitive to the wrongness of things, aflame to take strong action to vindicate what he values, anxious to get started on this before the agitation subsides, and finding nothing which is rationally adequate to the purpose. Thus he is led to make terms with destructive impulses and give them a kind of rational endorsement. Destructiveness can produce a false sense of adequacy, because the mind is relieved of the problems of co-ordination which are involved in the pursuit of good—as a nation feels united in war because of the postponement of political conflicts. There is also a false sense of escape from selfish interests; I have nothing personal to gain by punishing the offender and, therefore, feel nobly unselfish.

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The effect of anger is thus to blind and intoxicate; and this spreads by infection. A man cannot bear to be alone in his sense of intolerable wrong and of imperative need to take action against it; so he passes on the disturbance and draws other people into his intoxication; they confirm one another's distorted outlook, and prevent a return to reason. Once men are branded in the spirit of a "crusade", there is no knowing into what folly they may be led.

On the other hand, to keep the anger to oneself, and try in solitude to control it and root it from one's mind, is an almost impossible task, especially if there is some justification for anger. Can a man forget the facts? Is he to pretend that they are not disturbing facts, which require something to be done? When he tries to act calmly, is he doing more than hiding his anger away at the back of his mind? And does not this hidden anger assume subtle disguises and thus influence his behaviour more perniciousy than if it were left in

(Continued on page 424)

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THE CALENDAR OF THE CHURCHES

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1958

Aberdeen, Unitarian Church, Skene Street, 11 and 6, Rev. W. B. Tavener
Aberystwyth, New Street Meeting House, 11, Mr. D. Cadwaladr Morgan
Altrincham Dunham Road Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. A. W. Vallance
Ainsworth, Unitarian Church, Knowsley Road, 11.15 and 3, Rev. B. Gill
Astley, Unitarian Chapel, Manchester Road, 6.30, Supply
Bath, Trim Street Chapel, Unitarian, 6.30, Rev. S. Spencer
Belfast, All Souls, Elmwood Avenue, 11.30 and 7, Dr. A. L. Agnew
Belfast, First Church, Rosemary Street, 11.30 and 7, Dr. H. J. McLachlan
Bessels Green (nr. Sevenoaks), Unitarian Church, 11, Rev. Dudley Richards
Billingshurst Free Church, High Street, 11, Rev. F. Hankinson
Birkenhead, Unitarian Church, Bessborough Road, 6.30 (January 4), Mr. E. T. Williams
Birmingham, Church of Messiah, Broad Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Gordon Stuart
Birmingham, Waverley Road Church, and Hurst Street Mission, Small Heath, 6.30, Mr. A. Benton
Blackpool, North Shore, Dickson Road, 10.45 and 6.30, Mr. E. A. West
Blackpool, South Shore, Lytham Road, 11 and 6.30, Mr. Frank Lowe
Bolton, Bank Street, 2.30, Sunday School, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. E. Shirvell Price
Bolton, Unity Church, Deane Road, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. Arthur J. Long
Boston (Lincs.), Unitarian Chapel, Spain Lane, 6.30, Rev. Henry Hall
Bournemouth, Unitarian Church, West Hill Road, 11, Rev. Lawrence Redfern
Bradford, Broadway Avenue, 3.15, Supply
Bradford, Town Hall Square, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Frank A. Bullock
Bridgwater, Christ Church, Dampiet Street, 3, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. Wm. Millar
Bridport, Unitarian Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. G. Randall Jones
Brighton, Christ Church, Unitarian, New Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. John Rowland
Bristol, Lewin's Mead Meeting, 6.30, Rev. A. H. Birtles
Bristol, Oakfield Road, 11, Rev. A. H. Birtles, 6.30, Mr. R. L. Nicholson
Burnley, Unitarian Church, Trafalgar Street, 3, Rev. L. Hallworth
Bury, Bank Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. F. M. Ryde
Cambridge, Memorial Church, Emmanuel Road, 11 and 6, Rev. H. Stewart Carter
Cardiff, The West Grove Unitarian Church, 6.30, Mr. Arthur Wilson
Chatham, The Church of the Great Companions, Hamond Hill, 3, Mr. Arthur Foote
Cheltenham, Bayshill Unitarian Church, Royal Well, 10.30, Sunday School, 11 and 6.30, Rev. John M. Quinn
Chester, Matthew Henry's Chapel, Trinity Street, 11 and 6.30, Supply
Chesterfield, Elder Yard Church, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Eric Shaw
Chowbent Chapel, Atherton, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Kenneth Twinn
Coventry, Great Meeting House, Holyhead Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. H. Morris
Crewe, Free Christian Church, Beech Street, 6.30, Supply
Crewkerne, Unitarian Church, Hermitage Street, 11 and 6.30, Mrs. M. R. Dickin
Croydon, Free Christian Church, Wellesley Road, 11, Mr. David Skelton.
Denton, Wilton Street Chapel, 11, Children's Chapel, 6.30, Rev. Fred Cottier
Derby, Friar Gate Unitarian Chapel, 6.30, Rev. W. Brown
Ditchling, Old Meeting House, 10.45, Rev. Basil Viney
Doncaster, Free Christian Church, Hall Gate, Rev. E. A. Davies, 6.30, Rev. Horace Bacon
Dover, Adrian Street, Unitarian Church, 11, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. Philip C. Whiteman
Dublin, Stephen's Green, West, 11.30 and 7.30, Rev. E. Savell Hicks
Dudley, Old Meeting House, Wolverhampton Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Norman Kirkman
Dukinfield, Old Chapel, Chapel Hill, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. S. P. Whitehouse
Dundee, Unitarian Church, 53 Constitution Road, 11, Supply
Edinburgh, St. Mark's Church, Castle Terrace, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Bruce Findlow
Exeter, George's Chapel, South Street, 6.30, Rev. Dr. F. D. Meyer-Kluge
Gee Cross, Hyde Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. Harry Smith
Glasgow, St. Vincent Street, Unitarian Church, 11, Miss Winifred Taylor
Glossop, Fitzalan Street, 2, Sunday School, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. W. H. Cordell
Gloucester, Barton Street, 3, Rev. J. M. Quinn
Guildford, Ward Street Church, 11.15, Rev. R. Nicol Cross
Hale Chapel, Hale Barns, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. G. J. Price
Halifax, Northgate End, 3, Mr. David Craven
Hastings, Free Christian Church, South Terrace, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Denbigh Hilton
Hinckley, Great Meeting, Baines Lane, 11 and 6, Supply
Horsham, Worthing Road, 11, Rev. J. Martin Hall
Huddersfield, Fitzwilliam Street, 6, Church Members
Hull, Park Street Church (Unitarian), 6.30, Rev. Ernest Penn
Kendal, Market Place, Unitarian Chapel, 6.30, Supply
Kidderminster, New Meeting House, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Edgar W. Hill
Knutsford, Brook Street Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Albert Smith
Lancaster, St. Nicholas Street Church, 6.30, Supply
Leeds, Mill Hill Chapel, City Square, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Brian Golland
Leicester, Narborough Road, 11, Junior Church, 6.30, Mr. C. V. Walton
Leicester, The Great Meeting, East Bond Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Leonard Mason
Lewes, Westgate Chapel, 11, Mr. M. Thorneycroft
Lincoln, High Street, Unitarian Chapel, 6.30, Rev. H. W. Kendall
Liverpool, Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, 11 and 6.30, Dr. P. N. Tindall
Liverpool, Bootle Free Church, 11, Rev. C. A. Piper
Liverpool, Domestic Mission, Mill Street, 6.30, Rev. J. Kerr Murray
Liverpool, Gateacre Chapel, 11, Rev. Stanley R. Butler
Liverpool, Hamilton Road, Everton, 3, Sunday School, 6.30, Supply
Liverpool, Hope Street, 6.30, Rev. C. A. Piper
Liverpool, Ullet Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. B. Short
London, Bell Street, Edgware Road, 6, Rev. Walter M. Long
London, Blackfriars Mission and Stamford Street Chapel, 6.30, Mr. John Wilson
London, Brixton, Effra Road, 11, Rev. E. G. Lee
London, Essex Church, Palace Gardens Terrace, Notting Hill Gate, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Graham Short
London, Forest Gate, Upton Lane, 6.30, Rev. T. E. Dalton
London, Golders Green, Hoop Lane, 11, Rev. R. Tayler, 6.30, Rev. K. C. Thrasher
London, Hackney, New Gravel Pit Church, Chatham Place, 6.30, Rev. B. E. Goddard (also 11, 1st Sunday in the month)
London, Hampstead, Rosslyn Hill, 11, Rev. Donald P. Mair
London, Highgate Hill Unitarian Church, 11, Rev. K. C. Thrasher
London, Ilford High Road, 11, Rev. T. E. Dalton, 6.30, Mr. A. G. Tarrant
London, Islington, Upper Street, 6.30, Rev. A. V. Fox
London, Kilburn Unitarian Christian Church, Quex Road, 11, Rev. A. V. Fox
London, Lewisham Unitarian Church, High Street, 11, Rev. John Kielty
London, Leytonstone, Lea Bridge Road, Knotts Green, 6.30, Rev. Dudley Richards
London, Mansford Street Church, Bethnal Green, 6.30, Rev. John Kielty
London, Richmond Free Church, Ormond Road, 11, Rev. Walter M. Long
London, Stratford, West Ham Lane, Unitarian Church, 11.30, Children's Church, 6.30, Rev. T. L. Jones
London, Wandsworth Unitarian Church, East Hill, 11, Rev. Arthur Peacock (also 6.30, 1st Sunday in the month)
London, Welsh Unitarian Church at Highgate Hill Unitarian Church, 1st and 3rd Sundays, 6, Rev. T. L. Jones
London, Wood Green, Unity Church, Newham Road, 6.30, Rev. R. Tayler
Lytham St. Annes (Ansdell), Channing Road, 11, Rev. T. Wardle
Macclesfield, King Edward Street, 10.45 and 6.30, Supply
Maidstone, Unitarian Church, Market Buildings, 6.30, Mrs. Muriel Hilton
Manchester, Blackley Unitarian Church, Chapel Lane, 6.30, Rev. David C. Doel
Manchester, Cross Street Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Dr. R. W. Wilde
Manchester, Gorton, Brookfield Church, Hyde Road, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Maurice Bonner
Manchester, Monton Church, Eccles, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. W. Hill Wareing
Manchester, Pendleton Unitarian, Cross Lane, 6.30, Rev. T. W. Roberts
Manchester, Platt Chapel, Rusholme, 6.30, Mr. Wm. McMillan
Manchester, Renshaw Street Mission, 6.30, Rev. B. L. Hopkin
Manchester, Stand Chapel, Whitefield (January 4), 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Sydney H. Knight
Manchester, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, 11, Mr. Philip M. Brown
Manchester, Wythenshawe, Unitarian Church, Brownley Road, Benchill, 6.30, Rev. John Gill
Mansfield, Old Meeting House, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Kenneth Sherratt
Marple, Unitarian Hall, 31 Stockport Road, 11 each Sunday
Mexborough, Free Christian Church, 6.30, Rev. E. A. Davies
Middleton, Old Road Chapel, 3.15, Rev. David C. Doel
Moretonhampstead, 3 and Newton Abbot, 6.30, Rev. C. G. Tonks
Newcastle-on-Tyne The Church of the Divine Unity, Ellison Place, 11 and 6.30, Rev. John Storer
Newchurch (Rossendale), Bethlehem Unitarian Church, 2 and 6, Rev. John Mather
Northampton, Kettering Road Church, No Service
Norwich, Octagon Chapel, Colegate, 11, Rev. J. A. Kennedy
Nottingham, High Pavement Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. C. Gordon Bolam
Oldbury, Unitarian Church, Birmingham Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Harold A. Gore
Oldham, Lord Street Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. T. E. Nuttall
Oxford, Manchester College Chapel, 11.30, Rev. H. L. Short
Padiham, Nazareth Unitarian Church, Knight Hill, 10.30 and 6, Rev. L. Hallworth
Park Lane Chapel, near Wigan, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Gordon L. Clarke
Plymouth, Unitarian Church, Notte Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. H. Kersley
Poole, Unitarian Church, Hill Street, 11, Junior Church, 6.30, Rev. J. W. Dumble
Portsmouth, John Pounds Memorial Church, High Street, 11, Junior Church, 6.30, Mr. J. R. Sturgess
Preston, Unitarian Chapel, Church Street, 6.30, Rev. T. Wardle
Ringwood, Hants., The Meeting House, 6.30, Rev. Francis Terry
Rivington Chapel, Nr. Horwich, Lancs., 3, Rev. R. J. Pritchard
Rochdale, Blackwater Street, 10.30 and 6, Rev. F. W. Barr
Rotherham, Church of Our Father, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. T. Phillips
Sale, Atkinson Road, 11, Rev. John Gill
Scarborough, Unitarian Church, Westborough, 6.30, Rev. G. W. Parkinson
Sheffield (Attercliffe), 6.30, Mr. J. Fairhurst
Sheffield, Fulwood Old Chapel, 11, Rev. F. Sokell
Sheffield, Unity Church, Crookesmoor Road, 11, Rev. E. D. Davies
Sheffield, Upper Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. G. Stanley Whitby
Shrewsbury, High Street, Unitarian, 11 and 6.30, Supply
Sidmouth, Old Meeting, Unitarian, High Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. H. Whitaker
Southampton, Church of the Saviour, London Road, 6.30, Mr. H. A. Guy
Southend-on-Sea, Darnley Road, 6.30, Supply
Southport, Portland Street Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. T. J. Jones
Stockport, Unitarian Church, St. Peter's Gate, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. J. R. Blackburn
St. Helens, Corporation Street, 6.30, Mr. E. E. Lloyd
Stockton-on-Tees, Wellington Street, 6.30, Rev. A. D. Williams (also 11, 2nd Sunday in the month)
Stourbridge, Presbyterian Unitarian Chapel, 11, Rev. C. Simpson
Swansea, Unitarian Church, High Street, 6.30, Supply (also 11, First Sunday in the month)
Swansea, Pennard Free Christian Meeting House, 11, Supply
Swinton, Swinton Hall Road, 10.45 Student, 6.30, Rev. P. B. Godfrey
Taunton, Mary St. Chapel, 11, Rev. Wm. Millar
Tenterden, Old Meeting House, Ashford Road, 6.30, Rev. G. Kebell
Todmorden, Unitarian Church, 10.45 and 6, Rev. Alec L. Findlow
Torquay, Unity Church, Montpellier Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Charles Eaton
Trowbridge, Conigre Unitarian Church, 11, Rev. S. Spencer
Warrington, Cairo Street, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. Eric Wild
Watford, Friends' House, Church Road (by permission), 7.30 (last Sunday in the month)
Wallasey, Memorial Church, Manor Road, 11, Devotional Service, 6.30, Mr. A. S. Patterson
Walsall, Unitarian Free Church, Stafford Street, 11, Rev. R. J. Williamson, 2.30, Sunday School
West Bromwich, Lodge Road, 11, Children's Church, 6.15, Rev. R. J. Williamson
West Kirby, Brookfield Gardens, 11, Rev. Maurice Johnson (also 6.30, first Sunday in the month)
Whitby, Flowergate, 2.30, No Service
Wilmslow, Dean Row, 10.45, Rev. A. B. Downing. Styal, 6.30, Rev. A. B. Downing
York, St. Saviourgate Chapel, 6.30, No Service
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AUSTRALIA

Adelaide, Unitarian Christian Church, Wakefield St., 11 and 7, Rev. Colin Gibson
Melbourne, Unitarian Church, Cathedral Place, C.2; Unitarian Half-Hour broadcast, 4.15. Services: 4 p.m., second Sunday in each month, Evening 7 p.m. Rev. V. James
Perth, Western Australia, Unitarian Free Christian Fellowship, Rev. R. H. Featherstone, 132 Duke Street, Scarborough, West Australia
Sydney, New South Wales, Unitarian Church, 15 Francis Street (off College St.) 7.15, Rev. D. W. Robinson, Manse Telephone LX 5321
Unitarian Fellowship of Australia, 1 Gills Alley, Melbourne, C.1. Minister: Rev. W. Bottomley. Meetings as advertised.
Seaford Community Church, Austin Road, Seaford (Vic.). S.S. weekly at 2.15 p.m. Public Worship, fortnightly, 3.15 p.m. Minister: Rev. W. Bottomley

CANADA

Montreal, Church of the Messiah, Sherbrooke Street West and Simpson Street, 11, Rev. Angus Cameron
Toronto, First Unitarian Church, 175 St. Clair Avenue West, 11, Rev. W. P. Jenkins
Vancouver, B.C., Unitarian Church of Vancouver, 1,550 Tenth Avenue West, 11, Rev. A. P. Hewett

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland, Unitarian Church, Ponsonby Road, 11 and 7, Mr. M. J. Willis
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Cape Town, Hout Street, 11, Sunday School; 7, Service, Rev. Maurice C. Rawes

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Many Inquiries

Under the title, "The Church That Says 'We Agree To Differ'", an excellent article on the Unitarian religion appeared prominently in the *Sunday Express* of December 16. It was written by Mr. Bernard Harris. As a result, Essex Hall has received more inquiries by letter and 'phone than any of the staff can recall. And we understand that the *Express* has received numerous inquiries also. The article is an excellent statement of the Unitarian faith and every comment that has been heard in Unitarian circles has been one of pleasure and gratitude.

THE INQUIRER

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(*Continued from page 422*)

the open? Trying to hunt down this insidious influence, he drives it deeper into his personality, where it breeds self-distrust and self-hatred. The man's anger becomes a fire in which he himself seems to be burnt up and consumed. The self-hatred may, in fact, be justified, and the whole experience prove purgatorial, destroying things in him that needed to be destroyed. But it is a terrible experience to bear alone.

*

The man will escape from the terrors of isolation if he can feel that his own disturbance is connected with a deeper disturbance at the heart of things. The facts are indeed disturbing, so disturbing that his own feelings are inadequate to do justice to the situation, so disturbing that the tensions set up will of themselves produce effects greater than he can achieve: the responsibility does not rest solely upon him. This is the spirit of St. Paul's advice: "Avenge not yourselves, but give place to his wrath of whom it is written 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay'."

*

There is, of course, a great danger in this attitude—the danger of attributing to God the same blindness and destructive intoxication which anger produces in men, and of imagining that one has enlisted a supernatural ally and approver of one's own hard, narrow, self-justifying rage. But it is possible to conceive of a divine disturbance which is infinitely above and different from human anger, but which yet is the ultimate reason for our feelings of things needing to be swept away, of things needing to be vindicated, and of pressing, thwarted, agitated urgency. Hosea attributes to God a turmoil of conflicting emotions as to what he should do about Israel. Jesus suggests that God is like a woman searching through her house for something she has lost. Such imagery is partial and incomplete; but it is a corrective to pictures of settled wrath or Olympian calm. And it gives a perspective in which our own perturbations of mind can be seen in truer proportion.

News Review

Act of Dramatic Worship

A deep impression was made on the congregation of Flowery Field Church by the recent visit of members of the Stalybridge Church, who performed the act of dramatic worship "For All Thy Saints". This was written and produced by Mr. John A. Ratcliffe, secretary of the Stalybridge congregation, and in the eminently suitable church and chancel at Flowery Field was performed with great skill and deep sincerity. It depicted the saints of the Christian Church, in colourful costume of their respective periods, called forth by John the Divine to bear witness to the faith that was in them, and the manner of the processionals and of the way in which the lines were spoken was most effective and inspiring. The service was performed on the previous Sunday for the first time at Stalybridge, and on the following Sunday made an equally deep impression on the Ashton congregation.

Croydon's New Church

The Foundation Stone of the new Free Christian Church which is being built on a new site in central Croydon to replace the building in west Croydon partially destroyed by enemy action, was laid on Saturday, December 13. The chairman of the congregation, Mr. R. A. Dunk, presided, and the ceremony was performed in the presence of a considerable gathering of members and friends by Mr. Charles J. Martin, senior trustee and member of the church, and a former chairman and treasurer. The minister, the Rev. J. P. Chalk, offered the dedicatory prayer. The church is expected to be finished in the early autumn, 1959. The same evening, the members of the Croydon branch of the Unitarian Young People's League gave an excellent entertainment at Dennett Hall, and on the following day, Sunday, December 14, the [illegible] anniversary service was conducted by the Rev. E. G. Lee, editor of *The Inquirer*, who gave a most inspiring address to a large congregation.

Dr. Alfred Hall

We regret to report, on going early to press for this issue, that Dr. Alfred Hall died on the evening of December 18.

IF EVERY UNITARIAN—

(From an "Inquirer" secretary at a church which takes over thirty copies weekly.)

"The last two to join our list of subscribers came voluntarily to ask for a copy. I was encouraged. I like to think that the prompt and regular appearance, all sorted, on the table in our entrance hall each Sunday of copies of *The Inquirer* helps to advertise your interesting paper. Our members are becoming denominationally minded as a result."

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